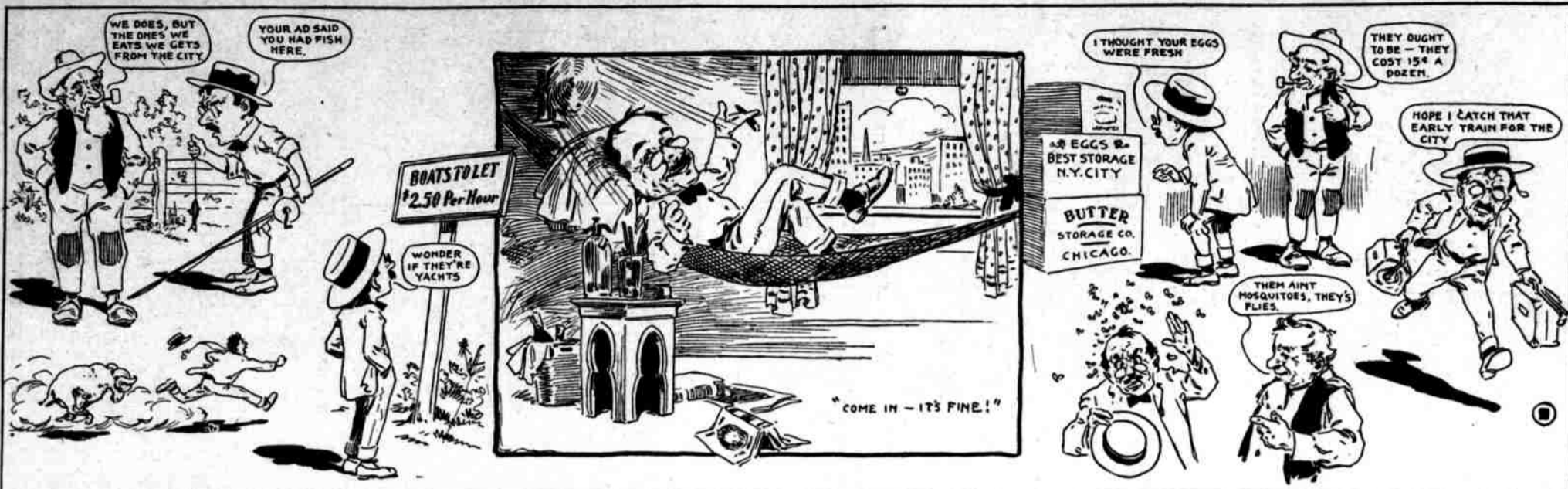


SPENDING ONE'S VACATION HAS ITS PROBLEMS By Joseph A. Lemon



AT LEAST THE SIGNATURE WAS ORIGINAL

BRANDER MATTHEWS, at one of the receptions in New York of the Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, said: "American art is at least original. We don't plagiarize. Perhaps, indeed, we don't consult enough—for lessons in taste and form—the great models of the past. But at any rate we don't plagiarize."

"This fact gives oddity to a magazine editor's discovery, among the manuscripts recently submitted to him, of a short story that was, word for word, a copy of Poe's beautiful tale of 'The Cask of Amontillado.'"

"The editor sent for the thief. The thief was quite unabashed."

"Now," the editor said, "a little imitation I can tolerate, but when it comes to wholesale pillage—"

"Wholesale pillage," the other cried.

"Yes," said the editor. "From beginning to end you haven't altered a single word."

"Oh, yes, I have," said the plagiarist. "Look at the signature."

Lincoln's Dry Wit

HARRY THURSTON PECK, the critic, was praising Lincoln. "Lincoln, himself a superb writer," said Professor Peck, "could not stand tedious writing in others. He once condemned for its tediousness a Greek history, whereupon a diplomat took him to task."

"The author of that history, Mr. President," he said, "is one of the profoundest scholars of the age. Indeed it may be doubted whether any man

of our generation has plunged more deeply in the sacred fount of learning."

"Yes, or come up drier," said Lincoln.

Via "Gus" Thomas

AUGUSTUS THOMAS, the playwright, was returning East on a train the other day when his seat companion, a conductor from the South, on his vacation, told the following story of his negro porter:

"I had a run on the L. & N. then. Sam was often on my train."

"He was troubled with sore feet, so he slipped off his shoes."

"It was along toward morning and he was just finishing shining the passengers' shoes. The train stopped for some reason, and I told him to go out and see what was the matter. His own shoes were at the other end of the car, so he slipped on a pair in hand without lacing them. It had been raining, and the country was very muddy. When a few steps from the car the train started without

warning. In running for the step one of the shoes pulled off in the mud. It happened that this pair belonged to a very irascible gentleman who had bothered the porter a great deal."

"He came to me and whispered: 'Say, for de Lawd's sake, what am I a-goin' to do? I done lost one of that gent's shoes in the mud.'"

"Why, that's too bad," After a moment's thought I said: 'I don't know unless you bluff it out.'"

"In the morning I kept an eye on Sam, anticipating some rare good fun. There came a savage ring from this man's berth. Sam was at the other end of the car, and did not move. He knew the ring. Another longer and louder ring, and Sam hurried down the aisle. 'Something for you, sir?'

"Where's my other shoe?"

"I dunno, sir. I done shined them

both last night, sir. Ain't it under your berth?"

"No, you hunt it," he snapped.

"The porter hunted long and diligently, while the passenger grew continually more irate."

"At last Sam went to him and said: 'I've hunted the whole car over and can't find it.'"

"Well, you hunt some more. I've got to have that shoe."

"Sam hunted for the car over again. 'I've looked everywhere and can't find it at all,' said he, coming back. 'I jes' been thinking, there was two women got off about 4 o'clock this morning. They had awful long dresses. Maybe they dragged it off.'"

"Well, maybe," said the passenger, pausing. "Say, Sam, the train stops for a quarter of an hour at the next station. Here's \$4; see if you can buy me a pair. Get \$3; and be sure they are good and wide."

"The porter got off and soon came back, handing a package to the passenger with his most gallant air. 'Here you are, sir,' he said.

"All right, Sam; here's a half dollar. Thanks."

"You got out of that pretty slick," I said to him afterward.

"Say, boss," he chuckled, "you don't know how well I got off; them shoes only cost me \$1.50."

THE WRONG SPIRIT

FREDERICK TOWNSEND MARTIN was condemning the spirit that animates too many "slum" expeditions.

"A little girl from the East Side," he said, "was invited the other day to a garden party given by a very aristocratic lady to a group of little East Siders."

"The little girl, as she drank her tea and ate her plum cake on a velvet lawn under a white-blossomed cherry tree, said to her hostess: 'Does your husband drink?'

"Why—oh—no, not to excess," was the astonished reply.

"How much does he make?"

"He doesn't work," said the lady. "He's a capitalist."

"You keep out of debt, I hope?"

"Of course, child. What on earth?"

"Your color looks natural—I trust you don't paint."

"Look here," exclaimed the hostess, "what do you mean by all these impudent questions?"

"Impudent?" said the little girl. "Why, ma'am, mother told me to be sure and behave like a lady, and when ladies call at our rooms they always question mother like that."

What He Represented.

Mayor Gaynor, at a dinner in New York, was discussing a divorce commission that had been appointed in a neighboring State.

"But, sir," said a reformer, "I note a bachelor on this commission. What is the good of a bachelor on a divorce commission?"

"Oh," said Mayor Gaynor, smiling, "he represents the co-respondents."

ADVENTURES WITH A VACUUM CLEANER By Willett Stockard

"AND now I can't sweep except at night," Mrs. Hill sobbed.

"You can't sleep except at night?" inquired her husband wonderingly.

"Can't sweep except at night," she repeated.

"Oh," he vowed, and thought intently for a moment before he added, "I guess I don't get the idea yet."

"It's this miserable little town and a vacuum cleaner I bought to-day," she explained. "You know what they are—the kind you attach to the electric light thing, and they make house-cleaning a joy, or something. And after the man got his money and went off, and I tried to use it, I remembered this insignificant little place didn't have any use for electricity except at night, and there isn't any current on during the day. And now all my house-cleaning will have to be done between 6 in the evening and 6 in the morning."

"Trouble with you, little one," her husband remarked, after he regained his composure, "is that you haven't got any sense of humor. Now, instead of sitting down and crying until I come home, why, I can't see how you could keep from laughing at the whole thing."

"You could, if you had some rooms you wanted swept, and there wasn't anything you could do but sit down and wait for the lights to come on at night."

"Well, never mind about it now—just leave it to me. Let's see the thing, anyway, and we'll give her a trial now."

Mrs. Hill produced the vacuum cleaner. She had dried her cheeks, and was rapidly recovering her customary cheerful spirit. Her husband's manner encouraged her to become confidential.

"I fastened the thing to the wire, and pushed it across the room until I was worse tired than if I'd swept the room a dozen times, and then I saw that it wasn't taking up a bit of dust or anything else—except about all the strength I had. Even then I didn't remember about the current not being on. I thought I hadn't read the directions right, or that something was wrong about the machinery. I looked it over for about twenty minutes and poked a bat pin into the works and finally got a screw driver, but I didn't have the nerve to use it. I tried to make the thing work two or three times more, and then I remembered the current. It was kind of silly and funny, wasn't it?"

But her husband was intent upon a picture of a woman who was using a vacuum cleaner and displaying a winsome smile.

"Wonder if it's absolutely necessary to grin like that in order to get the thing to working," he commented; "also if it would be a gross violation of etiquette to use it without doling up in dinner-clothes?"

HE read the directions twice, examined the cleaner thoughtfully and prepared to put it into operation. "Get out my Tuxedo," he called playfully, as he took up an end of the attachment. "Next will be cleaning the room by vacuum process."

And then he stopped, struck by a new thought, and again turned to his wife.

"Say, when we take the light globe off to fasten

the attachment on, why, it will leave the room in the dark!"

His wife received the observation with a giggle. With the exception of the front rooms, there was but one light in each room of the house. Mr. Hill sat for awhile in deep thought, but finally gave up hopes of devising a way to overcome the difficulty. He turned off the light, removed the bulb and attached the cleaner. Then he waited for his wife to bring him a candle or a lamp.

"We haven't a candle in the house," she informed him upon her return, "and there isn't a drop of oil for the lamp."

He received the intelligence with quiet resignation. "If by any chance there should be a match on the premises," he remarked very politely, "will you not have the goodness to strike it and hold it for me until I get started?"

"Of course, I can run over and borrow some oil from the neighbors," she suggested.

"The neighbors will hear about all this soon enough, as it is," he returned, "and there's no need of making any explanations until we're called on to. This is strictly a family affair, and we'll avoid all scandal as long as possible."

"There might be a little oil in the lamp on your old bicycle," she said after a pause. "The lamp's rusted, and I don't think we can get it off of the wheel, but then I could bring the bicycle and all up here and roll it around the room behind you or in front."

He turned upon her with a look of suspicion.

"There are still a few things my self-respect won't allow me to do," he asserted, "and that is one of the few. If you will oblige with the match—thank you!"

SHE held a lighted match, and he began to push the cleaner over the floor. The labor was not arduous, so long as he confined himself to the part of the floor not obstructed by the furniture. He became cheerful once more, and spoke lightly of the performance.

"Easiest thing I ever tried. It does the work so easily you can't tell it's working at all. You want the walls and the furniture cleaned also?"

"Just the floor to-night."

"Guess I might as well go over the whole house, then, so long as I'm about it. Great invention, this thing," he went on, running it into a small stand during the darkened interval required for her to strike another match. "What is that thing that fell off?"

"Before it fell off it was that little pitcher mother gave me," she answered, picking up some of the pieces.

She held a match in each hand, while he disengaged himself and the machine from the stand and a rocking chair that stood near it. Mr. Hill had lost none of his enthusiasm on account of the accident, and he believed in thoroughness. He continued to pass the cleaner over the floor, until he was convinced that there was no dust remaining, and he took the trouble to use it behind the larger pieces of furniture. There was much difficulty in this, and some dexterity was required upon his part. Several times he became entangled with articles of furniture, from which Mrs. Hill had to assist in releasing him. But he persisted in making a second devastating tour of the room before

he was satisfied, and then he announced that not a particle of dust had escaped him.

"Now bring on your front room!" he exclaimed.

"But they don't need anything done to them now," his wife hastened to say, for they contained articles too valuable to risk being broken. "You did just fine on this room, but don't you think we'd better start up in the attic next—until you get a little more practice, you know, and are a little more used to the machine?"

He made no reply to this suggestion of a possible lack of confidence in him. He unfastened the apparatus and took it to the room above, leaving her to replace the broken furniture, boxes and miscellaneous accumulation of rubbish with which the room was stored might cause her husband some difficulty. For a moment she remained in the hall outside, awed by the noise of falling things and by her husband's language, and then Mr. Hill came out to disentangle his head and shoulders from a tennis net.

WHEN he succeeded in removing the net, he turned to her, and gravely touched his forehead, his left lip and his right knee.

"Why, you've got the net all off, dear," said Mrs. Hill, unable to comprehend the meaning of the peculiar actions.

"I was merely feeling where the legs of that broken table struck me," he explained, with that cold dignity he assumed when angered. "How it was possible to be placed so it could do it, I can't say. One leg of the table is broken off—fortunately. Otherwise, I suppose it would have found a place to fit in somewhere about me. As it is, I think I've been hit all over, with the possible exception of the bottom of my feet."

He felt gently of the back of his head, and removed some cobwebs from his hair.

"Did you ever do any laundry work?" he demanded, turning upon her with a fierce gaze, "or are you expecting to be reduced to taking in washing for a livelihood some day? No? Then why in heaven's name do you keep a zinc tub hanging up on the wall exactly where it would be jarred off on top of anybody who happened to move about in the room? That bird cage and those picture frames you had balanced so delicately on the edge of the shelf are not greatly damaged," he continued, a trifle more kindly, "but I seriously fear that both of those flower pots are cracked where they hit me on the head. Unless there's something further you wish to stack up somewhere overhead, something that will fall easily and yet be able to strike a fearful lick without breaking, why, I think there remains little for you to do. I'll tend to the rest by myself."

"I'm sorry," she began.

"I thank you," he said, bowing gravely.

"Don't you think we'd better wait until to-morrow night and get some oil for the lamps?" she asked,

"When I set my mind upon doing anything," he asserted, extending his lower jaw, "I either do it, or something gets broken."

The choice of an alternative was not happy, he realized, remembering a few articles in the room below, but he ignored his wife's smile.

"Well, then, why can't we wait until morning?" she inquired. "The current is on until about 6 o'clock, you know, and by that time I think it will be light enough outside for you to see what you're doing."

"If I ever get up before 6 o'clock in the morning to sweep a room," he returned, "I hope I won't be able to see what I'm doing."

"But, dear!"

"Say, look here," he interrupted her; "if you have some doubts about there being any austere silence up here when I begin, why, your doubts do credit to your judgment. In all probability there will be some mild excitement in that room when I resume operations, and I advise you to go out and sit on the front steps. If the neighbors make any officious inquiries you may tell 'em that your husband is upstairs having a little fit, or that he's indulging in a mild spasm of delirium tremens to pass away the evening."

Mrs. Hill reluctantly withdrew and he returned to the room. He lighted a cigar, and began in the hope of being able to see a little better, and began a second attempt upon the attic. In the meantime Mrs. Hill remained near the foot of the stairs, listening anxiously to the sounds from above.

FOR awhile there was little to hear beyond an occasional bump or a slight jar. Then there came a crash which caused Mrs. Hill to catch her breath and tremble. Her husband had mentioned that two flower pots had fallen from the shelf. She suddenly remembered that there had been three upon it. The silence that followed seemed more ominous than the noise of the accident, and she became even more alarmed, thinking that possibly her husband had been rendered unconscious. She started up the stairs, but stopped suddenly, for there was a noise even more violent than the other. There was another short period of silence, and after that she saw her husband come out into the hall trundling an old sewing machine. She slipped away unobserved and went into one of the front rooms to wait.

From time to time there would come sounds of disaster from above, sounds of collisions and falls, and after each of them there would be an impressive silence. She felt greatly relieved when she heard him come out of the attic.

But her relief lasted but for a short time, for he entered the room adjoining it, and alarming sounds began to emanate from the new field of operations. She could hear him moving the bed and other heavy furniture, and upon going out into the hall she heard his voice, which sounded strangely muffled. She decided that he was using the cleaner under the bed at the time. When he finished that room he entered the next, and continued from room to room until he had visited all of them upon the upper floor.

Finally, he came downstairs and went into one of the back rooms. Mrs. Hill tiptoed down the hall and peeped in the door as she passed it. He was seriously passing the cleaner across the floor, guided only by the

light that glowed faintly from his cigar. She had hardly retired to the end of the hall before he stepped out into the light and removed a hat box from his foot. His manner was very grave and he made no remark when he saw her. He passed from one to another of the rooms in the rear of the house and finally joined her in the hall.

She cleared her throat, nervously, and spoke to him.

"It's too bad that the only rooms with more than one light are the very ones that don't need cleaning."

"Oh, that's all right," he returned. "I might as well go over the library, so long as I'm about it, and we'll see what kind of work the machine is doing. I'm a little curious to see myself," he admitted.

SHE ventured to follow him into the room, and seated herself upon the divan, where she remained very quiet. He turned off one of the lights, removed the bulb and adjusted the attachment. Then he pushed the cleaner over the floor a number of times. During the performance he retained the nonchalant expression of one to whom vacuum cleaners and their use were an old story, and there was a quiet dignity in all of his movements. But in the meanwhile Mrs. Hill had begun to look at him in amazement.

"Why, dear, is that the way you've been using it in all the other rooms?" she inquired.

"Why, certainly," he answered, stopping to look at her.

She sat for a moment staring at him in wonder, almost in horror. Then she uttered a shriek, sank back upon the divan, and laughed until she was unable to see. There was a mild look of inquiry upon her husband's face, but otherwise there was no change in his former expression, and after looking at her for awhile he turned away and once more began to move the cleaner across the floor. He had finished a second round of the floor and was attempting to push a section of the bookcase from the wall, when Mrs. Hill succeeded in restraining herself for an instant.

"Don't!" she gasped.

He again turned upon her, this time with a look that alienated her mirth and demanded an explanation.

"You haven't cleaned a thing in the whole house," she managed to stammer.

"No?" he asked coldly. "And why not?"

"Because," she gasped, "you haven't turned on the current!"

After looking at her intently for a moment, he walked out into the hall and sat down upon one of the lower steps of the stairs. He sat there for a long time, resting his head in his hands, while she tried to control her emotion. She was trembling from the effort when he chanced to raise his head and look at her.

"Oh, don't mind me," he muttered politely. "I'm merely thinking of the future with that thing in the house. If you bought it for the purpose of making house-cleaning a joy, I don't see that you should be worried about anything."

"But I'm worried about you, dear," she returned chokily.

"With your sense of humor, I'm afraid you're going to laugh yourself 'most to death."

"Oh, I'll laugh at it," he promised, almost humbly in spite of the gruffness of his voice. "I'll laugh, all right, but I've got to have a good night's rest first."